

**Television Film & Media Studies 430
Documentary Field Production
Fall 2009**

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| Fall 2009 | Monday & Wednesday | Alan Bloom: Professor | Office: Music 251 |
| Lecture Wednesday 8:00-11:30 AM Music 255 | Labs Monday 8-9:40 AM & 9:50-11:30 AM Music 255 | Phone#: (323)343-4209 abloom@calstatela.edu | Office Hours: Monday 12:30-4:00 PM Wednesday TBA |

Course Description: Video field practicum stressing aesthetics and techniques of documentary production.

Prerequisites: BCST/TVF 200, 330.

Course Objectives:

1. To write, produce, shoot, edit and direct quality documentary video productions with a realistic understanding of resources, capabilities and goals.
2. To gain experience in the planning and execution of professional documentary field production.
3. To function in a crew position contributing as a team member to the completion of projects.
4. To understand the pre-production, production and post-production processes in documentary production.
5. To engage in critical self-evaluation as it applies to one's work on one's own project as well as one's work on other projects.

COURSE PROCEDURES :

1. Each student will complete assigned individual camera and editing exercises.
2. Each student will complete a major documentary production project as part of a student production team (teams will be set up in the first four weeks of the quarter).
3. Each student will participate in various crew positions on other team's projects.
4. Each student production team will hand in a finished major documentary production project and completed production report.
5. Each student team will manage their own screening and critique sessions in front of the class for each completed project.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

NOTE: Students are expected to demonstrate a positive and healthy attitude at all times. Students must demonstrate a willingness to accept criticism as part of the ongoing creative production process.

1. **Exercises:** Students, must plan, shoot and edit all exercises during time scheduled and may utilize as crew any members of the class.

The first exercise is a video taped interview, no less than 10 minutes in length and accompanying "B" roll of at least 15 minutes. Students will screen a representative selection of this exercise in class and maybe asked by the professor to review it at length in the lab. Students may be required to reshoot.

The second exercise is to edit the interview down to a tight package of less than three minutes, accompanied by a select reel of approx. two minutes of appropriate "B" roll. Prior to the actual editing of the interview a typed "paper edit" must be turned in for approval by the professor. Students may reshoot. Students will screen this exercise in class and maybe asked by the professor to review it at length in the lab.

The third exercise is to combine the interview and "B" roll into a finished documentary short of no more than three minutes complete with simple titles and credits. Students may reshoot.

2. Major Documentary Production Project:

Each individual student must present to the class a proposal for a documentary project, complete with assurances that access can be secured to all necessary interviews, locations, events, subjects, archival resources and related research material. These proposals will be presented in the fourth week of class and must be handed in as typed proposals of no less than two pages.

The professor & class will select between five and eight of these to be the major documentary production projects for the quarter. The students will be divided into the major positions of Producer, Director, Writer, Director of Photography and Editor. The designation of these individual responsibilities will be done collaboratively under the supervision of the professor. The exact combination of student team positions may vary from team to team with some responsibilities shared and some positions combined. During production positions not assigned (i.e. Audio, Grip, Gaffer, Script Supervisor) will be covered by the Producer, Writer and any other individual available to the team. Students must demonstrate flexibility in the assignment and execution of duties.

Student production teams, must plan and shoot the documentary production during time scheduled, utilizing as crew the members of the team and members of the class. The project should be no more than 10 minutes in length and is to be edited from no less than two hours of raw material. This project may be shot on any format and edited either on campus or off campus (in any format) if the resources are available. This project will be screened several times during the quarter at different stages of completion (i.e. interview selects, "B" roll, string out, rough cut or first off-line and on-line).

3. Scheduling: Students will be scheduled for shooting and editing on all projects. While equipment (camcorders, tripods, microphones and lights) may be checked out during the assigned production weeks the professor strongly advises you to have outside access to a camera. **NOTE:** you will be held financially responsible for any missing or damaged equipment. Each team is entitled initially to no more than 24 hours of editing time per project.

4. Crewing: All students are required to seek out crew positions on other TVF 430 student projects. Crew credit can be earned either in the field or in the editing room. Students will receive points for each position served on another student's project. These points may not total more than 10 points toward the student's final score and will be based on a curve of overall participation in the class. Students presenting exercises or teams presenting their project must always give credit to any other student(s) who rendered assistance on the exercise or project.

5. Production Report: All student teams are required to complete a project diary, final schedule, budget and in-depth self critical written analysis of the major documentary production project. Only one report is expected from each major documentary production, it is expected that the writing of this report will be a collaboration of all the team members although the principle writing of this report can be coordinated, overseen or spearheaded by one member of the team. **WARNING:** Take this assignment seriously, treat it as you would a major term paper, this assignment contributes heavily toward your grade. Remember it is more important to learn from one's mistakes than to simply celebrate a project's completion be it successful or otherwise. Due at the beginning of the final class period, this report must be no less than ten pages in length and the self critical analysis must be at least five of those pages. The size of text, spacing and margins must not exceed those on this page. No late assignments will be accepted. All written assignments must be neatly typed.

6. Tape: All student teams are expected to purchase video tape for their projects. All projects and exercises must be handed in, on the final exam day, on clearly labeled DVDs. **This DVD should include both the final team project and each team members finished third exercise.** Both DVD and case must have a clearly and cleanly labeled with the following information indicating:

- 1) Project title, Date of completion;
- 2) Project length, Number of audio tracks (1 or 2); and
- 3) Name(s) of Team.

On this DVD the students will provide the standard pre-roll of bars/tone, slate (CG) and beep count (10-3 sec). At the conclusion each DVD the student will record "copyright 2009 CSULA" and a complete list of credits. These DVDs (due at the final exam period) will be kept on file for at least 1 year after the completion of the course after which time the student may reclaim it.

7. Team Work: Students are expected to work on all of their assigned projects as part of a student production team. Responsibilities must be shared. All creative and personal differences must be worked out amicably outside of class. Problems and conflict between team members have no place in the classroom, these issues and your ability to deal positively with them is a measure of your maturity and professionalism. If these problems intrude into the classroom environment it will be weighed against your final grade. Two weeks after team set up there will be an opportunity for minor realignment of the teams **with cause**.

8. Critique Sessions: Each student production team will present their completed projects to the class at critique sessions on days assigned by the professor. You are expected to be on time at the beginning of class on your assigned screening day (lateness will carry a penalty to be levied against your score on that project). All students are expected to display an open and positive attitude at these sessions, to participate fully and welcome criticism from their classmates and professor. **Students are expected to demonstrate a positive and healthy attitude at all times.** Students are expected to be committed to the successful completion of all projects, not just their own. Students must be eager, hardworking and display initiative. Students must demonstrate a willingness to accept criticism as part of the ongoing creative production process. Respect the classroom, respect the critique, respect the class, respect the process and respect you classmates! Student conduct and attitude impact all graded aspects of this class.

GRADING SYSTEM:

Attendance: Because of the nature of this course, attendance is mandatory and unexcused absences will lower your grade. Every student must attend appropriate lab class periods (as assigned in the course outline). Lateness will be recorded and will be weighed in your final grade. An unexcused absence from a lab project will result in the lowering of your final grade ONE FULL point; e.g., a 90 will become an 89. Final student total scores will be graded on a curve. Scores on specific assignments will be awarded up to a maximum as follows:

| GRADING SYSTEM: | |
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| General Class Participation | 15 Points |
| Camera and Editing Exercises | 25 points |
| Major Documentary Production Project and Report | 50 Points |
| Crew Participation | 10 Point |

Missing Productions and Assignments: If a student misses their assigned time for tape screening for any of the exercises or the main project and is not excused prior to the screening date by the instructor or if excused by the instructor and there is not an alternative screening date available, this will result in a failing grade for that project and the course. Failure to complete any assignment will constitute failure in this course.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to change the course outline or course requirements due to class size or students' needs.

| COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS | |
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| September 28 Lab | Welcome to course and introduction to class requirements |
| September 30 Lecture | Production Ideas and Concepts |
| October 5 Lab | Camera Evaluation (Bring Cameras to Class) Remedial Camera & Editing Tutorials |
| October 7 Lecture | First Exercise Due. |
| October 12 Lab | (Paper Edit Due) Camera/Lighting for Field Production Remedial Camera & Editing Tutorials |
| October 14 Lecture | Second Exercise Due |
| October 19 Lab | Consult on Proposals |
| October 21 Lecture | Documentary Production Project Proposal Pitches In Class (Vote and Select Projects & Teams) |
| October 26 Lab | Begin Team Formation & Start Major Project First Professor/Team Meetings |
| October 28 Lecture | Third Exercise Due |
| November 2 Lab | Team Meetings |
| November 4 Lecture | Production Strategies and Problems Team Meetings |
| November 9 Lab | Team Meetings / Possible Production Crew Realignment |
| November 11 Lecture | Rough Cut Screenings and Critique |
| November 16 Lab | Team Meetings |
| November 18 Lecture | All Rough Cuts Screened |
| November 23 Lab | Team Meetings |
| November 25 Lecture | Project Screenings and Critique |
| November 30 Lab | Project Screenings and Critique |
| December 2 Lecture | Finish Projects and Reports |
| December 9 Final (8:00 - 10:30 AM) | Project Screenings and Critiques Project & Crew Reports and Copies of Final Projects & Exercises on DVD Due |